

Bandwagon



H.A.
ATWELL
(Vic.)

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1968



Vol. 12, No. 5

September-October 1968

Fred D. Pfening, Jr., Editor

Joseph T. Bradbury, Fred D. Pfening, III Associate Editors

Published bi-monthly by the Circus Historical Society, Inc. Publication, Advertising and Circulation office located at 2515 Dorset Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43221. Advertising rates: Full page \$35.00; Half page \$18.50; Quarter page \$10.00. Minimum ad \$8.00.

Annual subscription fees for the Bandwagon are \$6.00 and are due each May 1. Subscriptions received during the year will be charged the following: Those received in May-June, \$6.00; July-August \$5.00; September-October, \$4.00; November-December \$3.00; January-February, \$2.00 and March-April, \$1.00. Single copies \$1.00. Some back issues available at \$1.00 each.

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THIS MONTH'S COVER

One of the great clown photos of all times graces our cover this issue. Although the date is not known, it was probably in the early 1920s. It was taken by Harry Atwell, and is from the Pfening Collection.

The clown is Pat Valdo. An article in living tribute to Mr. Valdo appears in this issue of the Bandwagon.

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THE RINGLING ELEPHANTS

1888-1967

By Chang Reynolds

The year 1888 was significant in the history of the Ringling Brothers' Circus in that it marked the first purchase of elephants and the addition of two pachyderms to the menagerie. With this modest start the herd grew to a respectable size of approximately two dozen by the turn of the century. The show maintained a herd of about a dozen and a half to two dozen elephants for many years and then added more until it grew to huge proportions. Indeed, at one period in the 1930s, almost a third of all of the elephants in the United States were owned by the Ringling management. It reached a total of fifty-six animals by the mid-Twentieth Century. The size then dwindled to a number less than that of any season since the halfway point of the 1890s.

Mickey Mann was the first Ringling elephant superintendent. He assumed this task in 1888 when the show advertised "Babylon and Sampson, the two Biggest Brutes that breathe . . . Also the Only BABY Elephant in America." An advertisement (reproduced in *A Ticket to the Circus*, Charles Philip Fox, p. 32) for the stand of May 5, 1888 lists the two elephants just noted. Fannie was the baby elephant and she has been reported as the African species. Babylon was a member of the Ringling menagerie for many years although his name is sometimes omitted from the list of the animals on tour. This would indicate that his disposition may have been such that he had to be left in quarters. The Sampson mentioned in the advertisement of 1888 was a camel; two of which were purchased at the same time as the two elephants (*The Circus Kings*, Henry Ringling North and Alden Hatch, p. 86).

There were four elephants listed in the 1889 advertising (Fox, p. 32). Babylon is listed as the largest of the quartet with Spot indicated as the smallest. This last is a name that was soon abandoned. Fanny is reported as American born and Jewell is often reported as Jule. "Umbrella-eared" would indicate an African animal and most certainly causes confusion. Investigators have maintained that Fan-

nie was the African elephant and it must be that the publicity writer was careless. It is difficult to believe that the Ringling show had two African elephants in the second year of its herd's existence. Since both animals were on the show for some time and route books indicate only one African elephant present, the writer assumes that Fannie was the only one of that species. This belief is verified by an interview with Mrs. Charles Ringling quoted in *White Tops*, August-September, 1932, in which she states, "There were only three elephants with the show then. Fannie, a little African elephant, and Babe and old Jewel, a couple of big Asiatics." The reader should notice that Babylon was referred to as "Babe."

tingent in 1892 when G. W. Ezell was the superintendent. This is worthy of note since this was the first of many "Babes" that have paraded under the Ringling banner. Some sources report that Zip, a large African elephant, and Queen were on tour during the 1892 season. This made a herd of six animals: Babe, Jule, Fannie, Zip, Queen, and Lou. Zip died the next year and it is reported that Queen was traded to George Hall and three young animals were added. The author does not know the source in the literature for this information but if it happened as stated, the three small elephants would be included in the group of Fanchon, Prince, Sultan, and Duke who show up in 1893.

The herd included fifteen beasts in



Fanny, the first African elephant owned by the Ringling Brothers Circus, is the fourth animal from the front in this 1898 photo. Note the design of the howdahs in use at the time. Otto Scheiman Collection.

In 1893, according to the route book, the show toured with Babe, Jule, Fannie, Lou, Fanchon, Prince, Duke, and Sultan. Mark Monroe was Superintendent of Elephants that season. These elephants did not work in the performance as an act but did participate in the opening display, in the Hippodrome Races, and as obstacles for the leapers. Babe, Jule, and Lou had been added to the pachyderm con-

1895: Babe, Jule, Fannie, Lou, Fanchon, Duke, Prince, Sultan, Abdallah, Babylon, Corsair, Emperor, Pasha, Hortense, and Trilby. As Bill Woodcock once noted, this list of names "sounds like a press agent's dream" but some of them are for real. Those with the most exotic names never show up again and probably were coined for the route book. The last elephant mentioned in this group was a baby, and the first of several "Trilbys" to be associated with the show. Bill Woodcock wrote (letter dated 23 July 1960) that he had heard about Fanchon, "a female with a mean disposition." According to information at



White wagon used to transport Keddah, the seven-year old white elephant featured with the 1897 Ringling Bros. Circus. Pfening Collection.

the Circus World Museum, she was with the elephant herd in 1910 and was twenty years old at that time. This is further evidence that she was one of the youngsters added in 1893.

Two significant events regarding the elephant herd occurred during the 1896 season. Baldy and Jennie (Queen Jumbo) were added to the herd from the Reynolds' show on August 12 and the Lockhart Elephant Act from England became a part of the program at the start of the tour. Both Baldy and Jennie were very large specimens and years later (1916) Jennie was featured as Big Bingo in a special display. The Lockhart elephants placed a very fine act of well-trained animals in a program that had been quite weak in this respect.

The route books of the period show fine photographs of these performing pachyderms — two females and three males. However, there must have been more individuals in the Lockhart act than the photos disclose. It has been next to impossible to identify all of the animals which the famed English trainer brought to this country but some of them did gain enough notice to be identified. Two of the females, known as Nellie Lockhart and Jennie Lockhart, are very well-known to most circus historians. Jennie Lockhart remained with the Ringling show for many years and then went to the Wm. P. Hall farm in Lancaster, Missouri, during World War I. Based at the Hall place she toured with Coop & Lent, the Cook Circus, and Yankee Robinson. Lucky Bill Newton owned her after Hall and she ended her career in Union City, Oklahoma on the Orton Bros. Circus. Nellie Lockhart followed the same route through the 1918-19 tour with the Yankee Robinson show. She spent 1920-21 with Howes' Great London and 1922 with the Gollmar show. In the fall of 1922 she was sold to the King Bros. Circus but did not like the truck transportation it provided, broke loose, and died

in a swamp near Tupelo, Mississippi.

Probably the most famous of the males in the Lockhart act — at least the best recorded — was Charlie, better known from his association with his last trainer, Mable Hall. This fine looking tusker died on June 8, 1910 at the Hall quarters in Wisconsin (Billboard, June 25, 1910). Photos of Charlie being put through an act by Mabel Hall have been printed in *White Tops*. Woodcock (letter dated 18 July 1960) reports that he remembered, "Bert Noyes, elephant superintendent, talking about a little Harry Lockhart." Woodcock's letter continues, "I have been told of other Lockhart bulls . . . for one, that big female, Tommy, that Brad (Joe Bradbury) set forth in recent *Bandwagon* 'Campbell-Bailey-Hutchinson' article; also the late Wilhelmina, but I have nothing to offer in verification on these last two. I just remember that Soldier Johnson used to talk to 'Tommy' and call her Tommy Lockhart."

There was an elephant named Tom on the Ringling show in 1907 (Billboard, November 16, 1907) and Wilhelmina dates from the early years

of this century with Ringling according to the author's records. It was also the writer's good fortune to photograph and sketch both Tommy and Wilhelmina in their declining years. Tommy had a checkered career since she moved from circus to circus from her base at the Hall farm. She went with the Hall elephants to the Cole Bros. Circus and left that show to become a zoo resident in Los Angeles, California. Wilhelmina spent many years with Ringling and then was with Arthur and Bud Anderson.

Two major and several minor questions remain to be answered regarding this group of elephants. Since the Ringling herd jumped from fifteen in 1895 (route book) to twenty-five animals in 1897 (route book), how can the increase of ten elephants be accounted for? Two of the ten came from the Reynolds show and a third (Keddah) will be discussed directly. The remaining seven could have been Lockhart elephants since Bill Woodcock's letters leave the strong suggestion that there were probably more females than Nellie and Jennie. Certainly five of the seven were Lockhart animals. However, there are other complicating factors. At some date in 1897 the show exchanged Jule and a lion to the Central Park Zoo in New York City for a hippopotamus. Reports indicate that the Lockhart Elephant Act was on the Great Floto show in the early years of its exist-

The Lockhart Elephant Act included these five elephants (3 males and 2 females) grouped in an unusual pose characteristic of this famous act. This was the first, and one of the greatest, of the elephant performing groups exhibited by the Ringling show. Burt Wilson Collection.



Photo Copyright 1954 by Ringling Bros.



ence — yet the evidence seems to indicate that these animals, or a number of them, were on the Ringling show for several years after that date. Perhaps circus historians may clear this up by a careful search of the literature during the period between 1900 and 1905 with emphasis on the elephant act on the Floto show. Perhaps only the males were with this outfit. At any rate, the herd increased after 1895 and Perl Souder, who remained in charge of the department for several years, became superintendent.

The twenty-fifth elephant with the Ringling show in 1897 was Keddah, a "sacred white elephant" from Burma. This small, though valuable elephant, was transported in a large, white, lavishly ornamented vehicle. While on exhibition in the menagerie

Baby Boo and Veneta. This baby, in later years, established a record for mayhem that ranks high among the "tough" elephants in American circus annals. Burt Wilson Collection.



he was covered with pseudo-Burmese trappings and guarded every minute. The author of the route book insists that Keddah was an albino with eyes of a "pinkish hue" and a skin of "a peculiar light mouse color . . . not pure white, but nearly so." This seven-year old native of Burma stood five feet tall and had been shipped into San Francisco and then transported across the continent in time to make the tour that season. Although Keddah was the first white elephant to arrive in the United States in thirteen years he probably disappointed the patrons that had the opportunity to view him since his small size contrasted greatly with the huge tusker depicted in the advertising. Keddah toured with the Ringling show in 1898 as well and then came to a disastrous end in a fire.

The Ringlings had further experience with a white elephant in 1927 when they exhibited a second specimen, also from Burma. This animal bore the name, Pawah, and was in the charge of Dr. Po Min. Pawah arrived in New York and was sent to Bridgeport, Connecticut, in the fall of 1926. According to the description of a reporter the elephant was "grayish white and has white eyes with tiny dark brown pupils, and its ears are white with a tinge of pink inside." (Billboard, November 16, 1926)

By 1911 the Ringling elephant herd had changed in individuals but not a great deal in size. Modoc, Baldy, Big Jennie, Lockhart Jennie, Lockhart Nellie, Babe, and Trilby were still present. New animals, added in the intervening years, were Clara, Judy, Juno, Bessie, Jess, John, Dutch, Haddie, Sammy, Mary, Hazel, Pinto, Clyde, and Wilhelmina. (Circus Parades, Charles Philip Fox, p. 111). This total of twenty-one was increased the next year by the addition of seven

Fifteen Ringling Bros. Circus elephants in circular long mount at the beginning of this century. Note at least two males in this herd. Burt Wilson Collection.

of the Forepaugh-Sells elephants to bring the number in the Ringling herd to twenty-eight. The herd continued to include this approximate number of animals for the next half-dozen years. In 1918 George Denman listed Clara, Judy, Juno, Bessie, John, Dutch, Hattie (Haddie), Sammy, Modoc, Queen, Jennie, Mary, Babe, Hazel, Pinto, Clyde, Nellie, Trilby, Ryo, Wilhelmina, Romero, Venta, and Columbia as members of the Ringling herd. The bull referred to as Dutch in these lists was originally christened Duchess.

This Queen was a member of the Sells Bros. herd in the 1890s and had been Ringling property for some time. Her career ended on March 22, 1930 in New York when she died upon the show's arrival for its Coliseum date. Ryo was executed in New Haven, Conn., on June 20, 1928 after a brief but exciting stampede by some members of the herd. Judy had been left in winter quarters that year and died on March 28, 1928. Bessie died in Poughkeepsie, New York, July 13, 1930. Columbia, Mary, and Veneta ended their tours under the Ringling banner even earlier. Columbia was sold to the Kansas City Zoo in 1920 and Veneta crossed the Atlantic to Hagenbeck, the German animal dealer, in 1921. She had been featured early in this century as the mother of Baby Boo. Mary died at the Bridgeport quarters on March 10, 1919.

With the decision at the end of 1918 to combine the Ringling Bros. Circus and the Barnum & Bailey Circus, the elephants of the latter show became available for use. This meant that the herd of pachyderms either had to be increased in size, part of it left in



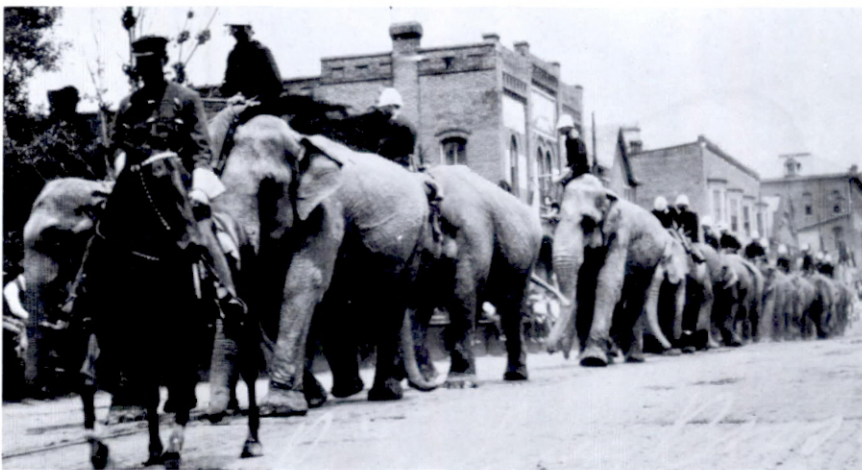
quarters, or some animals sold. As indicated above, two of the Ringling elephants were disposed of within a couple of years and another died. The Barnum & Bailey herd at the end of November 1918 contained these elephants: Katie, Albert, Bessie, Coco, Lizzie, Fanny, Nellie, Baby, Jennie, Topsy, Jap, Mighty, Queenie, Mary, Juno, Hattie, Pilot, and Jess. The reader will immediately notice that some of these names are duplicates of the animals in the Ringling herd of the same period, but extensive research has shown that different elephants were involved. Indeed, the frequency with which certain names are duplicated when naming elephants is probably the one most confusing item in trying to research their history. Of this Barnum & Bailey herd Jess, Queenie, and Mary joined Veneta on the trip to Germany in 1921. The one interesting note in this deal is that Queenie was sold by Hagenbeck to the Sparks show and had to recross the Atlantic. This made her an expert on ocean voyages since she already had some sea duty in order to get to the United States in the first place. The reader will encounter her again on the Ringling show later in this paper. Pilot, a big male, died in Bridgeport before the year 1918 ended. Juno and

Ringling elephants in parade at Lewiston, Maine, 1910. Note the very tall bull with high-arched back, fifth animal from left. She appears in several photos during the pre-World War I period and probably is Jenny from the W. B. Reynolds Show. Circus World Museum Collection.

Hattie were sent to Mexico in 1920 and Baby went to Rockford, Illinois, in 1919. Jap was sold to Wm. P. Hall in 1922 and Mighty, a fine male elephant, was executed at Bridgeport in 1923. Nellie was sold to the Houston Zoo in 1924 and Bessie and Coco went to the Christy Bros. Circus in 1926. Albert, another large male, died in 1929 and Topsy went to Prospect Park, Brooklyn, that same year.

One reason for the disposal of such a large number of elephants in the early 1920s was the arrival in quarters of six youngsters in 1922 and an additional nine in 1923. Received on November 5, 1922 were Marcella, Emma, Alice, Bingo, Mary and Joe. Purchased on November 10, 1923 were Blanche, Joyce, Mabel, Rose, Eva, Minnie, Dolly, May and Briggs. Also

The Ringling elephants at Peru, Indiana before World War I. Fanny, the first African elephant owned by the show, is the fifth animal from the left. Burt Wilson Collection.



added to the herd were Charlie on November 20, 1919 and Palm in September 1922.

In an effort to bring some order out of the details listed in the last few paragraphs a census of the 1924 elephant herd will be presented at this point. Thirty-six animals were on tour. Their names were:

| | |
|--------|---------------|
| John | Dutch |
| Ryo | Judy |
| Hazel | Romeo |
| Topsy | Alice |
| Juno | Joe |
| Babe | Mable |
| Lizzie | Queen |
| Bessie | Nellie |
| Fanny | Jennie |
| Emma | Katie |
| Mary | Wilhelmina |
| Joyce | Barnum Nellie |
| Palm | Modoc |
| Clara | Hattie |
| Sammy | Marcella |
| Pinto | Bingo |
| Trilby | Blanche |
| Albert | Rose |

Five of these elephants were males (Joe, Albert, Ryo, John and Sammy). Left in quarters at Bridgeport that season were an additional eight elephants which made the total number of animals under the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey ownership forty-four. The Bridgeport elephants were Barnum Bessie, Coco, Eva, Minnie, Dolly, May, Briggs, and Charlie.

Marcella, a 1922 import, was the only one of these forty-four remaining with the Ringling herd in 1967. This gives the grand old gal forty-five seasons of touring and performing. Although not a record, it still is a respectable number of years in show biz.

The forty-four elephants in 1924 were the nucleus of the big herd that marked the Golden Jubilee Year of 1933, and indirectly have led to one of the most controversial issues of all regarding the Ringling elephants. For several years questions have appeared as to the source of the fifty elephants which appear in the famous Atwell photograph taken on the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus lot at Grant Park, Chicago, Illinois, during the week of August 5-13, 1933. The latest appeared in "Readers Comments," *Bandwagon*, Vol. 8, No. 2, March-April 1964, following the use of the famous photo with an article this author wrote concerning circus menageries in an earlier issue. Gordon Potter asked the question at this time as others have asked on previous occasions. His comments are well worth re-reading. He indicates that the Ringling-Barnum show was only carrying forty elephants and explodes any ideas that ten other might have been shipped into Chicago from the

THE GREAT ELEPHANT

PHOTO MYSTERY



The so called 1933 Ringling-Barnum 50 elephant photograph has been cussed and discussed for years. Because of the interest in this view and the question of where the 50 elephants came from we have done some extensive digging in the Bandwagon files.

The records of Chang Reynolds and Gordon Potter say that there were only 40 elephants on the show during the 1933 season, and yet 50, "count um," appear in the photo in question.

The photo could not have been taken in 1933. In the background the midway and tents appear on the Grant Park lot in Chicago. A careful examination of the bannerline shows only two bannerline wagons and canvas banners on either side. The canvas banners were discontinued by 1930, when additional fold-out wagons were added. Another photo shown here taken of the show in Chicago in 1927, shows the exact lot layout, as in the "50 bull" photo. The banners and marquee are the same.

Grant Park is located near the loop in Chicago, on the shore of Lake Michigan, on flat level ground. The elephant photo shows what appears to be a depression of some kind in the ground in back of the side wall that is between the elephants and the midway.

The horizontal grouping of elephants is shown in the photo that has been generally circulated. A vertical grouping, with M. G. (Deafey) Deman in the foreground, that has not been generally circulated is also shown.



A careful examination of the two photos, both from the studio of Harry Atwell uncovers some interesting details. A number of men are shown in each view standing at the side of the sidewall. But in the horizontal grouping, about half of the men disappear, with those remaining standing in the exact positions as in the vertical grouping.

Many of the elephants are standing the same positions in both photos, but yet are located in different parts of each view. In the original enlargements, the deft hand of a photo retoucher is evident with lines that have been painted to more clearly outline some elephants standing in front of others. This would suggest that perhaps Roland Butler may have been involved in the conspiracy.

A cropped reproduction of the horizontal view, appears in the July-August, 1933, issue of the White Tops. If normal production schedules were kept this issue would have gone to press prior to the RB 1933 Chicago engagement running from August 5 to 13.

It would appear that these composite "paste-up" photos were prepared during the winter of 1932-1933 for use in the 1933 roto courier, where the horizontal view appears in the center spread. We have a courier for the June 29 date in Utica, N.Y. With all of the above facts being available for all of these years the real mystery is why this conclusion was not drawn long ago. — Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

Hagenbeck-Wallace or Al G. Barnes Circuses.

The only sources stating that fifty elephants were carried on the Ringling-Barnum circus that year, as far as this author's research has revealed, are the program sold on the circus and a review of the elephants in the United States that year by Karl Kae Knecht, in *White Tops*, Vol. 7, July-August, 1933. The reason for announcing a herd of fifty elephants is understandable when it is recalled that the year 1933 was celebrated as the

Golden Jubilee Year. This Fiftieth Year, which opened in Madison Square Garden (April 8-May 6), featured The Durbar of Delhi which included a golden girl riding a golden elephant. Mr. Knecht's article pointed out that Ringling-Barnum owned approximately one-third of the three hundred elephants in the United States in 1933. The remaining Ringling-owned bulls were located on the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus which had twenty-nine and the Al G. Barnes Circus which carried fifteen. The Ringlings had more than

ninety elephants as their property early in the season and this author wishes that the whole group of nearly one hundred had been brought together for a photograph. (See box for additional information on the 1933 photo.)

In the preparation of this article, the author has compiled a list of the forty elephants that Ringling-Barnum brought to Chicago in 1933. Gordon Potter verifies that there were forty. Reports from the show at other stands indicate there were forty.

Actually the show had toured with forty-two for most of the season to that point. Two elephants were disposed of before the circus reached Chicago. Eva, was sold to the zoo in Erie, Pa., at the end of June. Sammy, a veteran male pachyderm of the herd who dates from the beginning of the 20th Century, was sold to the Detroit Zoo on July 10. He was destroyed at the zoo on March 5, 1938. Eight of the elephants in the 1933 herd were former Sparks Circus bulls and had come to the Ringling show when Sparks went off the road. The forty elephants in 1933 were:

1. Alice (Purchased 1922 and poisoned at Atlanta, Ga., 1941)
2. Sparks Alice (from Sparks Circus)
3. Babe (Purchased 1888 and donated to National Zoo, Washington, D.C., 1934)
4. Sparks Babe (From Sparks Circus)
5. Bingo (Purchased 1922. No record after 1942)
6. Blanche (Purchased 1923. Sold to Hunt Bros. 1940)
7. Bonnie (From Sparks Circus)
8. Clara (On RB 1911 and poisoned at Atlanta, Ga., 1941)
9. Dolly (Purchased 1923. Executed in Sarasota 1948)
10. Duchess (On RB 1911. Sold to Franklin Park Zoo, Boston, 1939)
11. Eva (Purchased 1923. Sold in 1955)
12. Emma (Purchased in 1922. Sold 1948)
13. Fannie (From Barnum & Bailey 1918. No record after 1941)
14. Hattie (On RB 1911. Sold to Goebels 1939)
15. Hazel (On RB 1911. Sold to Franklin Park Zoo, Boston, 1939)
16. Jess (Sold to Kelly-Miller in 1948)
17. Jenny (From Barnum & Bailey 1918. Sold to Mills Bros. 1950)
18. Joe (Purchased 1922. Executed at Baldwin Park, Calif., 1940)
19. Joyce (Purchased 1923. Sold to Learmont)
20. Juno (On RB 1911. No record after 1941)
21. Katie (From Barnum & Bailey 1918. No record after 1948)
22. Lizzie (From Barnum & Bailey 1918. Poisoned Atlanta, Ga., 1941)
23. Mable (Purchased 1923. Poisoned Atlanta, Ga., 1941)
24. Marcella (Purchased 1922. Still on RB 1967)
25. Mary (Purchased 1922. Poisoned Atlanta, Ga., 1941)
26. Sparks Mary (From Sparks Circus)
27. Minnie (Purchased 1923. Sold to Mills Bros. Circus 1951)
28. Little Modoc (Ringling Bros. 1897. No record after 1948)

29. Modoc (Purchased 1930. Died 1957)
30. Sparks Myrtle (From Sparks Circus)
31. Nellie (Ringling Bros. 1911. No record after 1948)
32. Palm (Purchased 1922. Sold to Stevens Bros., 1951)
33. Pinto (Ringling Bros. 1911. Sold to Biller Bros. 1949)
34. Barnum Show Queen (From Barnum & Bailey; then from Sparks)
35. Rosie (Purchased 1923. Burned in Cleveland fire)
36. Little Tillie (Sparks Queen) (From Sparks Circus; Poisoned at Atlanta, Ga., 1941)
37. Topsy (From Sparks Circus)
38. Little Trilby (Ringling Bros. 1895. Sold to Mills Bros. 1949)
39. Wilhelmina (Ringling Bros. 1911. Sold in 1940)
40. Yasso (On Ringling-Barnum 1928-1935)

Louie, Carrie, Joe, and Jean. That statement shows that five elephants were within easy distance of the lot where Ringling-Barnum was showing. Of course, there may have been Wm. Hall elephants at the fair also. Although there is no direct evidence that either of these herds were used in the photograph, it generally has been overlooked that these animals were in the vicinity.

The Golden Elephant in 1933 was the most famous Modoc of all and new to the show in 1930. She had been purchased by Leon Washburn from a New York animal dealer in 1904. At that time she was approximately seven years old and after the purchase she put in several years with Washburn, James Patterson, and the Gentry Circuses, until her purchase by the Ringling-Barnum combination. She was a huge specimen but not quite as tall as some of the other animals

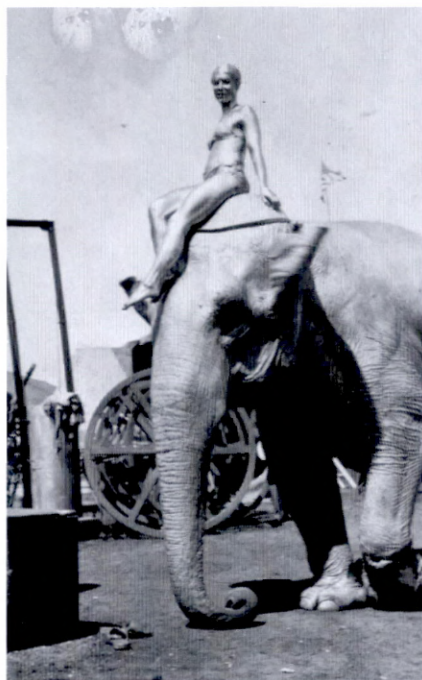


Thirty-seven elephants of the combined shows at the Bridgeport, Conn., quarters. Note the Asia wagon in the right rear of the photo. McClintock Collection.

Since Hagenbeck-Wallace and Al G. Barnes Circuses were not close enough to Chicago to supply the additional ten elephants to make the half-hundred, the question still remains, "What was their origin?" This writer can add little to the discussion except to state that it seems there were additional elephants present in Chicago at the time. It took the author several years to trace and finally locate additional elephants in the immediate vicinity. While re-reading some letters from the great historian, William Woodcock, a paragraph was noted in which he told of visiting the 101 Ranch Show at the World's Fair in Chicago in 1933. He specifically mentioned the "famous Ranch five" — Babe,

in the herd. In 1935 her weight was recorded as 9180 pounds and her height as 7 feet 10 inches (Francis G. Benedict, *The Physiology of the Elephant*, p. 22.) In later years Modoc became famous as a dancing elephant — a solo performance on the hippodrome track or in the center ring. The author last saw her with the show on the west coast tour of 1955 and in 1957 the elephant handlers with the show reported that she had died early that year.

Of the many other elephants in the Ringling herd during the mid-thirties that are well-documented in the writer's biographical collection an additional individual is well-known to fans. This was Yasso who was featured with Major James Unger in a head-carry act during the late 1920s and early 1930s. She was an old elephant but of average size — 7 feet 7 inches tall and 5800 pounds in 1935 (Bene-



Modoc, who toured on circuses from 1909 to 1957, was the Golden Elephant in the 1933 spec, "The Durbar of Delhi." Photo was taken in Chicago and shows the Golden Girl and the Golden Elephant both of whom pinpointed the Golden Anniversary of the Ringling brothers that season. Burt Wilson Collection.

diet, p. 23). She finished her life on animal farms in Massachusetts during World War II.

A significant event of 1933, and one which anticipated a future tragedy, was the poisoning of fourteen of the elephant herd at Charlotte, North Carolina, on October 12. None of the stricken animals died but the show continued the tour without five bulls. Only the center ring act of five worked the matinee at Charlotte and Yasso replaced Modoc as the Golden Elephant in the spectacle. There was no elephant act in the night performance. The five animals that were temporarily out of commission were Modoc (the Washburn import), Babe, Alice, Queen, and Tillie.

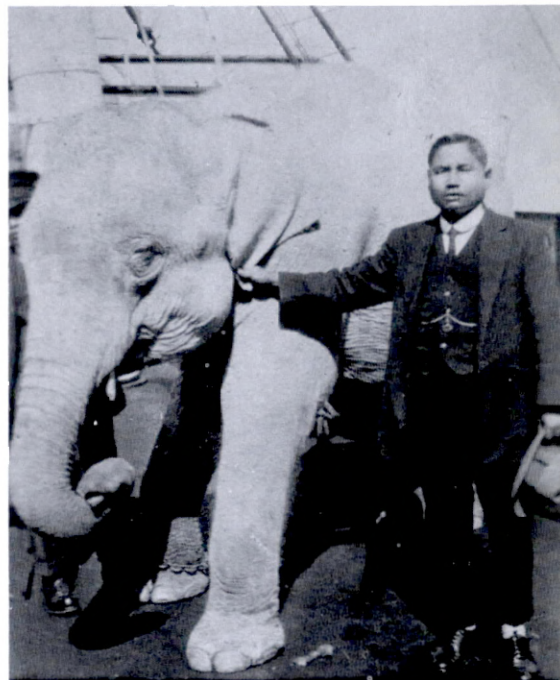
Real poisoning tragedy struck on November 5, 1941, in Atlanta, Georgia, when many elephants became ill and eleven died. Five died on the 5th. These were Alice, Lizzie, Puqua, Mary, and Blanche. Alice and Mary were still young animals that had arrived with the 1922 shipment. Puqua (originally Pourquois) was one of the two "pygmy" African elephants featured on the show during the late 1930s. Blanche had been purchased by Mugivan and Bowers in 1910 and had spent her years on their shows including John Robinson and Hagenbeck-Wallace. Lizzie had served on

various shows from her location at the Hall farm from 1905 to 1920 when she landed on Howes' Great London. Tours with Gollmar, John Robinson, and Hagenbeck-Wallace followed and she arrived on Ringling-Barnum in time to be a part of this debacle. Lizzie worked in several Tarzan films and participated in one famous stampede while on location. She was a tall, fine-looking bull, with a majestically sculptured head—one of the best-looking elephants this author has ever seen.

Tillie and Mable died on November 6. The latter had been brought to the show with the 1923 group and the former had been known as Queen on the J. Augustus Jones Shows, and as such was sold to the Sparks Circus in 1913. After Sparks was sold to the American Circus Corporation and then obtained by Ringling-Barnum she was used in the Sells-Floto herd. However, by 1933 the Sparks group had become a part of the Ringling-Barnum elephant line-up and, since this added two Queens to the show, the Ringling men switched her name to Tillie.

The additional four elephants died on November 7, 8, 9, and 14. Peggy was the last to go. She almost recovered. In fact, she was sent to the show at Macon on November 11 and joined Kas, Myrtle, Lois, Minnie, and Modoc who were still on the sick list and not performing. However, Peggy developed pneumonia and succumbed on the 14th. She was a young animal that had been purchased from Hagenbeck-Wallace by Busch and Company in St. Louis, Mo., in 1928. On May 4, 1930, Sells-Floto purchased her and she toured with that show for the last few years of its existence. Palm, who died on November 9, was another Ringling-Barnum fixture, having been imported in September 1922. Clara, (died November 8), as already noted, had been a member of the herd since the first decade of the century. The elephant that died on November 7 was another Lizzie. She was one of the four Barnum & Bailey elephants to be retained longer than ten years after the combination in 1919. All of the other members of the 1918 Barnum & Bailey herd had been sold or died by 1929. For the record, the other three that remained on the Ringling-Barnum Circus with Lizzie were Jennie, Katie, and Fanny.

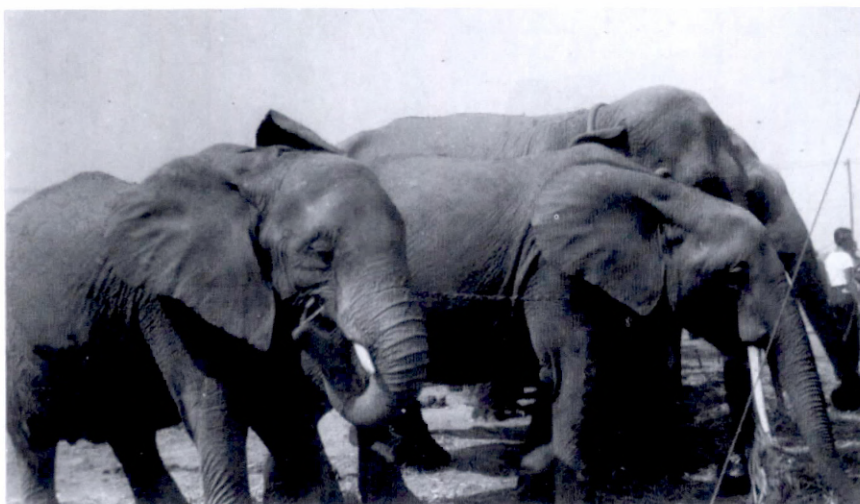
A great contribution to circus history was made in 1935 when Francis Benedict collected information concerning the shoulder height, weight, and approximate age of sixty-three elephants (*The Physiology of the Elephant*, Francis G. Benedict, Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1936). Sixty of these animals were circus elephants; nine from Downie Bros. Circus; thirty-four from Ringling-



Pawah, white elephant featured on the Ringling-Barnum Circus in 1927, with its owner Dr. Saw D. Po Min. The elephant was captured in November 1919 when about a year and a half old. It was less than four feet tall at that time. When exhibited by the Ringling-Barnum Circus it was about the same size as Keddah, the 1897 white elephant. Pfening Collection.

Barnum; and sixteen from the Al G. Barnes Circus. The sixtieth bull was the former Barnum & Bailey elephant, Jap, at that time the property of Tom Gorman. She was used for the entire study. To give circus fans some positive facts for discussion some of Benedict's findings will be cited at this point. All of the elephants studied but one were Asiatic females. The exception was an Asiatic male, Teddy, of the Downie herd.

Height: Of the sixty elephants only eleven stood eight feet or taller at the shoulder. Four of these were Gorman's Jap, and Lizzie, Bunny, and Myrtle of the Ringling-Barnum herd. Seven of the Barnes herd stood eight feet or over. The tallest of all sixty was Barnes Trilby at 8 feet 4 inches. Jewel, Babe, and Josky measured 8 feet 3 inches. Average height for the sixty elephants was slightly under seven feet six inches. Many fans will remember the famous Barnes Ruth who in her later years was a valuable member of the Ringling-Barnum pachyderm brigade. She was slightly below the average height of the group while Tony, who was usually teamed with Josky, was just about the average height at seven feet five inches. There were several elephants under seven feet tall in the Ringling-Barnum



herd at the time of Benedict's survey. However, most of these were from the group of youngsters that were purchased in 1922-23. These punks, nevertheless, had outstripped old Dutch who was estimated to be fifty years old in 1935. She stood only 6 feet 7 inches.

Weight: These sixty elephants averaged approximately 5,816 pounds each. The heaviest was Modoc, the dancing elephant, who carried 9180 pounds with a shoulder height of only 7 feet 10 inches. Second heaviest was Babe of the Barnes herd who weighed 9098 pounds. Frieda of the same group was a close third at 9058 pounds and Trilby, who led in height, was fourth in weight at 9000 pounds. Only nine of the sixty elephants weighed more than 8000 pounds. Dutch, the fifty year veteran, weighed 4335 pounds and was one of the lightest animals of the herd. Five of the youngsters weighed slightly less.

In 1938 the Ringling-Barnum herd was taken to quarters when the tour was interrupted at Scranton, Pa. Then, four elephants as well as numerous cat animals, horses, and the gorilla, Gargantua, were shipped to South Dakota in July to travel with the Barnes-Sells Floto show for the balance of the season. The four pachyderms involved in this shipment were Queen, Big Modoc (the dancer), and the two Africans, Sudan and Puqua. This show was brought to Sarasota at the end of the tour and the seventeen elephants with it at the beginning of the season plus the four Ringling-Barnum additions were added to the main herd. These seventeen were Trilby, Tony, Kas, Jewel, Frieda, Lois, Modoc, Mary, Dolly, Floto Jenny, Josky, Ruth, Babe, Barnes Jenny, Palm, Topsy, and Minnie. This was a mixed herd in that some animals had been on the Ringling-Barnum show previously; some were the original Barnes herd; and other had been American Circus Corporation elephants. This same season

Sudan and Pourquois (Puqua), two of the so-called "pygmy" elephants in 1941. For a number of years their Asiatic attendant was Sparks Show Queen. Five "pygmy" pachyderms were included in the original purchase for the 1936 season, but two were lost en route to the United States and Congo died during the winter of 1936-37. Chang Reynolds photo.

(1938) the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus closed at Riverside, California, and the elephants with it that belonged to the Ringling organization were sent to the Al G. Barnes quarters at Baldwin Park, Calif. The author visited this group of elephants several times during the period that they remained in the vicinity. Cheerful Gardner was in charge of them while they were quartered at Baldwin Park, Thousand Oaks, and Venice. The members of this herd never remained constant throughout the period that they were on the west coast. Some were exchanged with the main herd when the Big One toured the state in 1939 and 1941. Others were sent to small shows, one died, and another was shot. The elephant that was executed was Joe, a very tall, tuskless male who was part of the 1922 group of imports. He had first become a semi-resident of California when shipped here in 1934 with Tommy, Prince, Charley-Ed, and some females, to make the film, "Clive of India." He was the last of these four males to die.

The remainder of this herd rejoined the show in Florida, leaving Southern California on January 2, 1942. (Pat Graham, interview, Dec. 6, 1966). Graham related the story which involved loading twelve elephants at Venice in a Palace car. They were Babe, Bingo, Fannie, Jessie, Juno, Mabel, Margaret, Nellie, Pinto, Rosie, Vic, and Little Modoc. Graham reported that by the time the train reached the Arizona border the elephants had knocked all the windows

out of the car and that the whole thing was a shambles by the time it reached Sarasota. **Billboard** (February 14, 1942) reported that nine bulls were shipped to Florida and three were left in California and turned over to zoos. The author is not aware that any of these elephants went to a zoo at this time. Bunny, Dutch, and Wilhelmina were at Goebel's, however, just before the start of World War II.

In 1947, six elephants were added to the Ringling herd. Hugo Schmitt brought with him Karnaudi, Minyak, Sabu, Icky, and Mutu. Abilee (soon changed to Emily) also joined the circus at this time and lasted until the Madison Square Garden visit of 1956. She was an African specimen. Minyak was a zoo-born elephant—a real rarity at that time. Her birthdate was January 29, 1932 and the location was Essen, Germany.

The author's 1948 census of the Ringling-Barnum elephant herd taken in Los Angeles includes:

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Eva | Ringling Jenny |
| Tony | Big Modoc |
| Barnes Jewel | Lois |
| Big Ruth | Tillie |
| Sabu | Pinto |
| Karnaudi | Little Ruth |
| Topsy | Little Jewel |
| One-eyed Modoc | Big Trilby |
| Palm | Barnes Jenny |
| Katy | Icky |
| Nellie | Minyak |
| Marcella | Minnie |
| Little Babe | Wallace Jenny |
| Josky | Little Trilby |
| Barnes Babe | Judy |
| Emily | Mary |
| Mutu | Sparks Babe |
| Dolly | Myrtle |

Many readers will be confused by the three elephants named Jenny on this list of thirty-six and also by the other duplicate names. However, the author assures the reader that they all can be fitted into the scheme of transfers and purchases made by circuses during the first half of this century. A detailed accounting of their movements would make this paper entirely too lengthy. According to the author's records the Ringling circus has owned at least six elephants named "Jenny" and that creates confusion for sure. Of course, the first Ringling show Jenny came with the Lockhart Act and she was followed the same year by the Reynolds show Jenny. The latter died on tour in Columbus, Ohio, in 1918, and Lockhart Jenny left the show previous to World War I. The Ringling Jenny of the 1948 list (the writer has also heard her called Little Jenny to distinguish her from Barnes, or Big Jenny) was a remnant of the Barnum & Bailey herd. The Wallace Jenny of 1948 was, as the name indicates, a former Amer-

ican Circus Corporation elephant that had been on the John Robinson and Hagenbeck-Wallace Circuses. Barnes Jenny (often called Big Jenny on the Ringling-Barnum Circus) had a varied career under the name of Mable before assuming her position as a Barnes' stalwart in 1919. Her name was changed to Jenny at that time. The sixth Jenny of Ringling ownership began her activities with this circus in 1954 as one of a large group of baby elephants. She was christened Jean, but over the years the name "Jeanie" changed to "Jenny."

The three Babes of the 1948 list represent a trio among numerous elephants with this same name in Ringling show history. Babe from the old Sells Bros. Circus died at Baraboo at the end of the 1915 season (*Billboard*, December 25, 1915). The Babe from the Ringling show of the 1890s, referred to earlier in this paper, was presented to the zoo in Washington,

D.C. in the spring of 1934, and she died there in September 1937. The Sparks Babe mentioned in the 1948 was a J. Augustus Jones elephant purchased by Sparks in 1918. She joined the Ringling herd in the early 1930s. Barnes Babe was a huge animal that stood 8 feet 3 inches tall and weighed 9098 pounds in 1935 (Benedict, p. 23). She was one of the first Barnes elephants which were purchased about 1909. The third Babe, Little Babe on the 1948 list, was a former American Circus Corporation elephant that traveled with Ringling until the spring of 1966 when she was deposited at the Hartford Zoo.

The other two elephants that made-up the original Al G. Barnes herd with Babe were Jewel and Ruth. Ruth apparently had been on the Barnes show earlier than the other two. They were both with Ringling in 1948 and were known as Big Jewel and Little Ruth to the men in the elephant department that year. Jewel was as tall as Babe in 1935 and weighed 8252 pounds, while Ruth was only 7 feet 2 inches tall and weighed 6200 pounds (Benedict, p. 23).

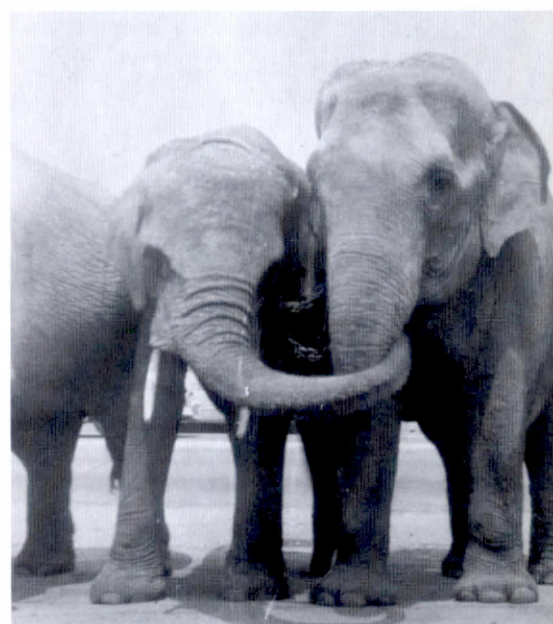
Within five years a new group of imports began to swell the ranks of the elephant herd. During the winter seasons of 1952-53 and 1954-55, thirty-one young elephants were grouped with the adult females of previous years. Some of the older elephants were sold but to sum up this extraordinary enlargement of the Ringling-Barnum elephant collection *Billboard*, March 24, 1956, reported that in 1956 the circus took fifty-two elephants to Madison Square Garden. Of these twenty-four were young animals; eighteen were adults; and eight were of medium size. Fifty of the animals were Asiatic and two were African. These latter were Emily and Louie

(later Diamond). *Billboard* also mentioned that two small elephants and Modoc and Babe were left in quarters. From this date the number in the herd dwindled rapidly. In 1960 there were twenty elephants at the Los Angeles stand; seventeen in 1962; eighteen in 1964; and sixteen opened the 1966 season in New York.

This writer believes without a doubt that the most exciting elephant ever presented by the Ringling show was Diamond. Not only because he was an African elephant, but because he was a male. The research that has been completed over the years has uncovered only four African male elephants that have been members of circus elephant herds since the time of Jumbo. These were Jumbo (Barnum & London); Mike (Sells Bros.); Safari (Cole Bros.); and Diamond. None of these with the exception of Diamond performed in the ring. He was unique—a fabulous tribute to Hugo Schmitt's skill as a trainer. Diamond was an African; he was a male; and he worked in the center ring performing any and all of the evolutions accomplished by his Asiatic cousins.

This history of the Ringling elephants has necessarily been abbreviated. The complete biographies of all the elephants mentioned, their movements from show to show, and their disposal are subordinate to this discussion. This is especially true of the many elephants once belonging to the American Circus Corporation which became Ringling property. One famous female, however, should receive mention since she has received a great deal of attention over the years. One famous male will also be mentioned since he too has been featured in many news articles. Both have been dead for a number of years but their fame

Long mount 1941 style in Madison Square Garden. There were no male elephants in this herd. Note Modoc performing her solo dance on track at upper left. Pfening Collection.



Abilee (Emily), African female, with friend in 1955. The Ringling show has owned six African elephants since 1888—Fanny, Congo, Sudan, Pourquoi, Abilee, and Diamond. Chang Reynolds photo.

still brings their names into any discussion of elephants. They are Boo and John to be discussed in that order.

Boo (for Baraboo) graced the lithos shortly after the turn of the century as a baby born in Baraboo, Wisconsin. The mother, displayed with her, was Veneta, who was later dispatched to Hagenbeck. Boo, who caused trouble enough on the Ringling show, gained her reputation as a member of the herd at the William P. Hall farm when she worked on various shows during the 1915-1934 period. She then went to the Cole Bros. Circus and ended her days at the San Diego Zoo. The best description this writer has seen of Boo came from Bill Woodcock (letter to Bob Bernard, 23 July 1960). He knew her well and the following

quote probably describes her as effectively as can be done. In preface, it should be mentioned that Woodcock was writing in glowing phrases of the career of Al Langdon.

"In his time, Al handled some very tough bulls, both male and female, and was never hurt except the time Baby Boo worked him over. Highpockets was in charge of Tommy, Ding and Boo. Starting to trim feet, at which time Boo was particularly dangerous, High suggested doubling up on Boo, but Al countered with the remark that it was unnecessary as he had trimmed her feet singlehanded a hundred times. High started working on Ding at the other end of the barn and Boo grabbed Al by the shoulder and skinned and bruised him up very severely before High could get to her.

"A couple of years later she took High completely away from me and kicked him nearly the length of the barn before I could get around in front of her with a pitchfork and back her off High. Same caper, trimming her front feet; High rasping away, and me on the other side of her with John Pitchfork. The Mistake was not being on the same side as High, as she grabbed High and swung around away from me, and the space was so narrow it was a few seconds before I could get around in front. I took her off Soldier Johnson with Robbins Bros. Circus in 1926, and several other fellows later. She nearly killed poor old Joe Metcalf in 1924, and Joe always claimed that he never would

have gotten away from her if Ding hadn't come to his rescue. He had watered the bulls and started to chain up Boo when she nailed him, and, of course, Ding was loose. Old Ding was the greatest of them all. Reputed to have killed several people in her early days, but honest; not a snake like Boo... When I worked those bulls in 1929, I had been around them for a long time and knew every move they made. I had learned to be cautious and made it a strict rule never to chain or unchain Boo without my helper standing by. As a rule she was yellow when there were two men on hand, but a demon when she got a guy in a crack alone. I never knew Boo to bother anybody when she was loose and working in the ring."

The author has no report on the reason for Boo's dismissal from the Ringling herd but the above comment from a man who was with her for years should give a good indication as to why she was dumped. In fact, evidence could be presented that the Ringling management executed or sold any elephant that caused trouble. Considering the huge crowds that were attracted to the lot wherever the show toured it was a wise policy.

Woodcock also serves as the source for a brief review of the life and temperament of John (letter to Bob Bernard, 26 June 1960).

"I know of only one male bull that grew old and came to a peaceful end in this business, and that was Old John, who died with RBBB. Said to have started as a punk with Forepaugh and worked as a boxing elephant (John L. Sullivan), with that show. Also said to have been the doped up Forepaugh wife elephant, LIGHT OF ASIA, with 4-Paw in 1884, as opposed to Toung Taloung, the white bull with the Barnum & London Show. Old John was leader of Ringling and RBBB herd for years. Any kid could handle him when he was right. However, he did his bulling in the wintertime. His periods of **musth** were regular as a clock. Highpockets and others said that when the show would close and go into quarters, John was put in his place, and secured with eight heavy chains. When he started bulling he was a maniac. (They) used to throw feed to him, and a tub with rope attached was thrown to him and standing out of reach, water was squirted into the tub with a hose. Often got back nothing but the end of the rope, or maybe the tubs smashed flat as a pancake. Clean out the manure with long rakes, and

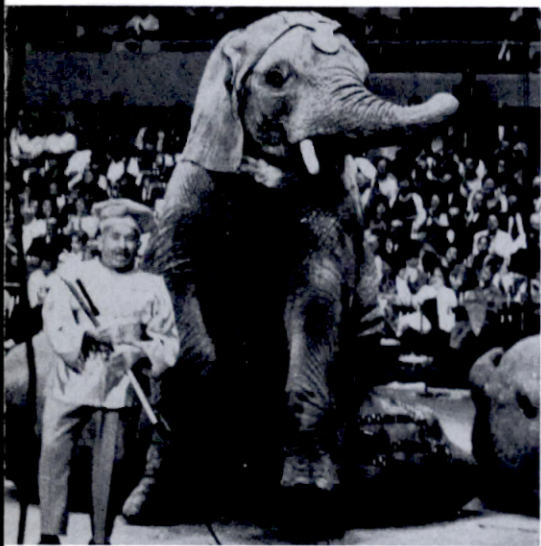
usually a battle royal to do that. When the show would go to the Garden, John and some other elephants would be left in Bridgeport. When the show went under canvas at Brooklyn, John was O.K., and resumed his place in the herd."

Thus John, the famous, tuskless male elephant. He died in Sarasota on January 16, 1932.

In conclusion, a word should be said about the men who have worked these elephants. Actually hundreds of men have probably been employed in the elephant department of the Ringling and the Ringling-Barnum circus over the years. However, the superintendents of this department have been comparatively few and some of these men have held the position for long terms. The "Dean" of them all, of course, was George Denman who was on the Barnum & Bailey Circus until 1909 although he was not the superintendent. Denman became Superintendent of Elephants on Ringling's Forepaugh-Sells Circus in 1910 and 1911 and then assumed the leadership on the Big One from 1912 to 1933. Another man with a long term in this position was Pearl Souder (1895-1908) while Hugo Schmitt, the present superintendent ranks second to Denman in length of service. Harry Mooney held this same position on the Barnum & Bailey Circus from 1909 through 1918 — a period of time that would place high in the ranks. Others with shorter service who have won recognition are William Emery, Lawrence Davis, Walter McClain, Richard Shipley, and Eugene Scott. Scott once told the author that the biggest problem with the job in the 1950s was the fact that there were far too many elephants for the amount of manpower available. This meant several trips from the train to the lot to get all the bulls onto the show grounds. Handling over half a hundred elephants with a scarcity of hands is no easy task and it is a tribute to these leaders that accidents have been so very few and runaways quite rare.

This article could not have been written without the assistance of many people. Contributions have spanned a period of many years. The author's route books, the files of **Billboard**, and the assistance of the men who have worked with elephants have been the chief contributors. Among this last group were Colonel Bill Woodcock, and his wonderful letters of not so long ago; Hugo Schmitt, Pat Graham, Ted Gallup, and George Emerson. Others who rendered valuable help were Bob Bernard, who furnished the Denman lists a few years ago; Gordon Borders, Richard Reynolds, Don Marcks, and Don Carson, who offered suggestions while this paper was in preparation.

Diamond, male African elephant, in the center ring. This remarkable animal was able to perform all of the evolutions carried out by his Asiatic relatives. Chang Reynolds photo.





By Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

A gentleman in Sarasota, Florida, received a surprise on his 87th birthday. The performing arena of the Circus Hall of Fame was dedicated as the "Pat Valdo Arena," on August 9, 1968. On hand with him at the time were old timers Mae Worth and Freddy Freeman.

As he sat there at his birthday party his mind no doubt went back to Binghamton, New York, when his father William J. Fitzgerald, a cigar factory owner, visited the Walter L. Main Circus in an attempt to remove his son Patrick, and take him home. The elder Fitzgerald was unsuccessful.

Patrick Francis Fitzgerald, at an early age had tired of school. He had deserted the classroom on a number of occasions, once to take a job leading

ponies in a circus parade, only to find that the parade went by both his home and the school. Shortly after that escapade he found a vaudeville star who gave him a few pointers on juggling, and this led to further deterioration of his scholastic efforts. His parents finally agreed to a compromise while he was in the tenth grade. If show business was ruled out he could take a job in the drugstore owned by a cousin.

Young Fitzgerald, like some other circus performers who became famous, got his real start at a Y.M.C.A. It was there that he met the Gallagher family, jugglers and acrobats. When the Main show arrived in Binghamton he deserted the drug store for the sawdust and spangles. By the time his folks got to him the dye had been cast. His first experience was that of a candy butcher, a far cry from performing, but still he was with it.

A few months later the boy got a

job with the John Robinson Circus as an apprentice clown at ten dollars a week. That was it, he definitely gave up all thoughts of a career in the cigar industry.

But the life of a new clown was not all peaches and cream. He had to "take the water," meaning that he was the butt of all gags of abuse. Patrick was on the receiving end of the double-bladed paddle, was climbed over during the chases, and was the one who had the water poured down his front. Old timers said the youngster absorbed the abuse with a zest that may not have since been matched.

While on the Robinson show another experienced clown suggested that Patrick Francis Fitzgerald was too long a name for professional use, and came up with Valdo. From that moment on

This 1915 photograph of Valdo shows a slight variation of his standard whiteface makeup.



This photo taken by Harry Atwell shows different variation of makeup.





While on Barnum & Bailey Pat Valdo joined the Orrin Davenport riding act, he is shown with the act in a Madison Square Garden photo, taken in 1908.

and to this day he was just plain Pat Valdo.

Continuing to perfect the art of clowning he began to develop a number of gags that have become standards among joeys. One of these called for Valdo to dress himself as a woman, and a midget served as an oversized bustle. While in the arena he would begin some female activity and then suddenly hoist his skirts and rapidly run around a curve, while the bustle, in the person of the midget, carried on in a straight line.

He developed into a master of makeup, finally settling as a white face with red lips and black eyebrows. In his off hours he dreamed up new gags. One of the best known clown routines was a Valdo brain child. It was he who congered up the famous midget clown fire brigade. In his early years he devised a red wig with a string in his pocket, that stood up and spun like a top.

His fame began to spread and in 1904 Valdo was hired by the Ringling Bros. World's Greatest Shows.

During his early days on the Ringling show he bought a dog, and trained it in a routine that ended with the dog biting him in the seat of his

pants. He then conceived the idea of making the dog into a miniature elephant. Charlie Bell used the elephant dog in his last years.

Between summer tours with the circus he began taking vaudeville engagements. One winter Valdo joined

a second unit of "Polly of the Circus."

He shifted to different shows during the following seasons and in 1911 moved up to forty dollars a week with the Barnum & Bailey Circus. In 1912 he was raised to fifty a week with Hagenbeck-Wallace.

But it was on the Barnum & Bailey show that he met a young lady named Laura Meers. Laura and her father Robert had a wire act on the show. The Meers family liked Valdo, but were always alert to anyone who might break up the act. Robert Meers took his act to the Hagenbeck show in 1911, perhaps to get his daughter away from the mooning Valdo.

Orrin Davenport and his riding act were with the Barnum show. Valdo joined the act for a winter vaudeville tour. Pat was not much of a rider, but his awkwardness lent a comic touch to the act.

Meers took his act back to the Barnum show after two seasons with Hagenbeck-Wallace, and Laura joined the Orrin Davenport riding act. Although Valdo's courtship had until that time been moving slowly, her return to the Barnum show sped things up. They were married in 1914. They joined forces in the following years in a number of different acts, one of which was the Davenport riding act.

Later Valdo joined with his wife's

In 1909 Laura Meers was a part of the Davenport riding act. Shown in this photo are left to right Arthur Greenwood, Laura Meers, Pat Valdo, Victoria Davenport and Orrin Davenport.



brother Fred to form a wire act called Valdo, Meers & Valdo. This act appeared with the newly combined Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus in 1919.

When Pat Valdo was appointed assistant ringmaster to aid Fred Bradna, in 1923 he quit clowning. Valdo and Bradna were quite a contrast, but worked well together. Valdo continued with his wife in their old act in addition to his new duties until 1929. During this period he reshuffled the entire clown alley on the big show.

Late in 1929 John Ringling named Valdo Director of Personnel. Pat put his red coat away and joined the management team.

During the summer season he kept an eye on the show every day. But during the winter off season he traveled the world over searching for new acts to keep RB & BB the greatest show on earth. In 1932 he made his first foreign tour. His many years as a performer provided the training to judge the type of act that would be a great success in America. An act that was a sensation in London might not have the requirements for a circus in the United States.

On one occasion he saw a troupe of five girls perform on Roman rings in Copenhagen, they were great as they showed strength, skill and grace and the act was different, but he felt they would not go in America because they stood on the ground and reached for their rings. He knew the people in this country would expect this type of act to work forty or fifty feet in the air. Valdo was once asked if there was really anything new so far as circus acts were concerned, and he emphatically replied that there was. He went on to say that circus men had often told him that there was nothing new possible in riding acts, that old-time bareback riders had accomplished every possible trick. While attending the Bertram Mills Circus in London he heard about the Cristianis Family.

He found the Cristianis in Brussels, arriving too late to catch the show. He persuaded them to go through their act at midnight. He saw hitherto-unheard-of feats on horseback. He was most impressed when Lucio stood on the back of one cantering horse, with his feet tied together, and then leaped into a backward twisting somersault, at the same time passing his body through a hoop and landing on the back of another horse. Valdo had seen no other bareback rider accomplish such a feat. He was so pleased he stayed with them until dawn and came away with a contract in his pocket.

Perch-pole acts had gotten into a rut, Valdo felt, most troupes were do-



Valdo's classic whiteface was used on a Ringling Barnum litho of the 1920s. A revived Valdo poster was used in recent years, reproducing the cover photo, it is shown below.

ing the same routine. In Europe he found the Walkmirs, whose principal stunt had a man balancing a pole on his forehead while two girls climbed to the top and executed swift revolutions on duplicate trapezes.

The Naitto Sisters were found in London by Valdo. In a prior year the big show had featured a balancing act in which one girl stood on her head on the head of another, who walked up

The warm personality of Pat Valdo is expressed in this 1940 picture.



a flight of stairs, across a platform, and down the other side. But he was impressed when Nio Naitto and her sister did just such an act, but instead of walking up the steps and across a platform, she walked across a tight wire bearing her sister in an up-side-down position on her head. He brought them to America.

In Germany he found the Otaris Troupe, a flying return act. The trapeze rigging was in the shape of a Maltese cross, outlined in lights. The fliers worked in a crisscross, their revolutions timed so that they passed each other in the air. Valdo said any American act could have done this same type of act, but no one had conceived it.

At the Circus Busch, in Berlin, he first saw Mlle. Gillette, a French aerialist, who did a break-away trapeze routine. She came to the big show.

Valdo has the memory of a whole herd of elephants, and it has often been said that he knows every circus act in the world, or at least, more of them than any other person. When the show was under canvas he had a wagon of his own in the backyard, a distinction afforded only to star performers and executives. This wagon served as his office and was furnished with a desk, a cot, chairs and a file. He kept an enormous file on circus acts around the world, data describing the act and telling who was in it and where it had played. But he seldom needed to refer to the file, for he simply remembered all of the acts that had come to his attention.

A canvas shade canopy was attached to the wagon, and he sat there watching the activities of the backyard and generally being available to all that came to him with a problem.

While the performance was on he always placed his chair so that he could peek through the back door. Several times during each show he would stroll into the big top using a variety of entrances and standing inconspicuously in the background to check up on how polished each act was. This kept all performers on their toes and it also gave him a chance to see how acts could be improved as well as to study the reactions of the audience.

Valdo is articulate when describing clowns. He says there are eleven basic clown types. 1. Whiteface, usually with a laughing expression, 2. Grotesque, with an overdone mouth and heavy eyebrows, 3. Tramp, 4. Clown Policeman, 5. Slugger, such as an emphatically Irish clown, 6. Rube, usually a thin face with chin whiskers, 7. Potbellied Clown, 8. August, featuring a makeup of several contrasting colors, 9. Lady Clown, 10. Midget Clown, and finally the European

Straight clown with knee pants and red ears.

In addition to these basic types of clowns Valdo rattles off the additional types that have appeared with the Ringling Barnum show over the years: Funny Rustic, Female, Wit, Double Face, Motley Fool, Hot One, Grimaldi, Leon, Merry Andrew, Crackerjack, French Comique, Pierrot, Auguste or Silly Auguste, Harlequin, Bumkin, Musical Clown, Elegant, Sunny Jim, Tumbling Pantaloon, Grimacer, Fat Boy, Odd Zany, Joker, Rooster Man, Character, Tramp, Neat, Punchinello, Riding Clown, Jim Crow, and Casca-deur.

As boss of the Ringling Barnum circus personnel he has always offered special counsel to the clowns. From his long years in white makeup he knows where of he speaks. The show has had as many as a hundred clowns many seasons, of all standard varieties. Staging the clown numbers has always been one of his more complicated chores. When Pat felt the clowning had become dull he conferred with his head "producing clown," the late Paul Jung, and together they tossed comedy ideas back and forth. A producing clown is a fellow who has a knack for dreaming up absurd situations, as well as the props to make the idea effective.

The embellishment of good old gags is never ending, a case in point is the clown firehouse number. One year he stuck a mule in it and another season a bride and groom. But he didn't think these new twists were hardly noticed by the public. "They like the flames and the clanging of the bell and the running around," he says.

After a new idea came up for consideration he held a skull session with full clown alley, since so many of them offered an extraordinary collection of skills. A good number of clowns are former acrobats and riders, having chosen clowning after an incapacitating accident. As in the case of Valdo many clowns have also done juggling and wire walking.

It was in 1942 that Valdo received a wire from a clown that had been with various other large circuses, declaring that he was ready for "big berth." Having watched him carefully for several years, Pat hired him, and Emmett Kelly came to the big show. Kelly worked independent of the regular clown numbers, generally drifting around the arena throughout the performance. During his years with the big show Kelly polished his style, and went on to work in areas outside the big top.

As one might suspect, a clown is very protective about his makeup and costume inventions. Copying either of these is taboo, however "borrowing" gags is accepted. Clowns will some-



This recent photograph shows Pat Valdo as a distinguished looking executive.

times hand the design of their makeup down to a son.

Pat could talk for days about the art of clowning, his 66 years with the circus probably would give him the distinction being with it and for it as long as any other individual. But clowns probably work to an older age than any other type of performer. In fact, because of the average age of the current crop of R-B clowns, and with few additions in site, the big show has established a "clown college." We can now hope that the clown numbers will return to their former brilliance.

One of Mr. Valdo's greatest talents lay in his ability to put a performance together. After John Ringling North took over the show in 1938 he did the scouting for new acts, and Valdo was relieved of that chore. He then placed the act in the best spot in the program to give a well rounded performance.

Pat once said, "If everybody liked the same kind of acts, it would be possible to get up a perfect circus." "But people differ greatly in what they like. Some people want to see a performer come within an inch of being killed every show. Others hate thrill acts, and refuse to look at them during the times the risk is the greatest. Some people like aerialists and some animal acts. Nearly everybody

is amused by the clowns. So we have to keep the program varied."

When you have seen one you have seen them all, is often stated about the circus. But Pat says that is not so. It must be new and different each season. There are certain fundamentals to a circus performance and you couldn't get by without them. Valdo says pretty girls, clowns and elephants are absolute tops, and just about as important are aerialists and riding acts. You have to have all of these to have a circus. Then you have to have novelties, something different.

Valdo says the big difference between a circus now and when he started is the production numbers. There were no elaborate spectacles like the theme walk-arounds of today. These were introduced by John Ringling North, when he took over in 1938. The big web numbers with lots of girls in fancy costumes have replaced the swinging ladders and iron jaw butterfly acts. Better equipment allowed these changes, the lighting has been greatly improved.

Pat says he hasn't any favorite kinds of circus acts. "I like them all!" "If they are good acts, I never get tired of looking at a good circus performance."

He also contributed much to the production specs that have become a trade mark of the Ringling Barnum circus. In recent years he and Max Weldy, the costume man, have begun on the next year's specs as soon as the current show was off the ground at Madison Square Garden. Bob Dover started training as an understudy a number of years ago, to relieve Valdo of the complete responsibility of keeping the Ringling performance at its usual high level. In the last few years Valdo has gone to New York for the opening but has not made the road tour. Bob Dover has been trained well and keeps the show up to the standards set by the master. The shadow of Pat Valdo will remain with "The Greatest Show on Earth."

1968 COLOR SLIDES

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| 30 Circus World Museum | |
| circus train | \$7.50 |
| 15 Milwaukee Lakefront | |
| lot scenes | \$3.75 |
| 30 Loading scenes at | |
| Baraboo | \$7.50 |
| 30 Wagons at Baraboo | \$7.50 |
| 18 black & white pix 8x10's | |
| of 1967 Circus Train | \$7.50 |
| 100 Black & white RB&BB, | |
| Barnes & Cole 1936 Train | |
| & wagons | \$15.00 |

Jim Roberts, 1116 W. 18th
Topeka, Kans. 66604

THE CIRCUS BUILT FROM SCRAP PILES

By Eugene Whitmore

Toward mid-summer 1934 when Chicago's Century of Progress was helping people to forget that a world wide depression was in full swing rumors that a circus—a 30-car outfit was being planned.

Then, about the time the last flags at the big fair were being hauled down after fluttering in Chicago's lake shore winds for two full seasons the rumors that sped around circus lots, The Showmans' League and anywhere circus people gather began to take more definite form.

Zachariah (Zach) Terrell, from Owensboro, Kentucky had raked in a wad of money from his "Live Power" show, which he had sold Standard Oil of Indiana as a big attraction for the 1934 stanza of the fair. Allen King was featured with a cage full of cats and it was the only attraction on the fair that gave Sally Rand and her plumed fans much competition.

More than that, Terrell was said to have operated an educational enterprise in rooms at the Morrison Hotel where several thousand card players frequently learned their lesson—you can't win in a game backed by the house.

Lining up his personal friend and former American Circus Corporation unit manager, Jess Adkins the two men leased considerable acreage and several abandoned buildings at Rochester, Indiana, only 24 miles and almost due north of Peru, Indiana, long time headquarters for circuses, going back to old Ben Wallace's days.

Everybody wanted to know what title would be hitched to the new enterprise, and practically every name but Tiger Bill's Wild West was suggested as a possible title. It was not

until work on construction was well under way that Terrell and Adkins revealed to Nat Green, Billboard Circus Editor and this writer that the new title would be Cole Brothers World Toured Circus, featuring Allen King and Clyde Beatty, each with an arena full of cats.

One of the first people to be hired on the staff was Fred Seymour, the circus building genius. Fred could take an acetylene torch and dismantle a stock car, a 70 foot flat or a personnel coach in less time than it takes to tell about it.

Both Terrell and Adkins had friends everywhere, and some of these friends were pressed into service for a still hunt for old circus property. Tom Scaperlanda and Harry Hertzberg went to Houston to inventory the property of George Washington Christy's Christy Brothers Circus, which had been idle for a couple of years. I think Paul Van Pool was pressed into service to see what was left at William P. Hall's circus graveyard in tiny Lancaster, Missouri.

Within a couple of weeks after moving into Rochester every train, and many trucks arrived with famous old pieces of circus property. Cage wagons, parade rolling stock, flats, coaches and stock cars—all looking as if they had rolled their last mile. Roofs leaked, sills were rotted, wheels had flat places where they should be round, sides of many of the wagons were rotted or broken and when I first saw this assortment of ancient, but once famous property I think I predicted that the show would never get on the road. But I did not reckon with Fred Seymour's ingenuity.

Remember that everything had to be built, or rebuilt from the ground up—elephant tubs, rigging, poles,

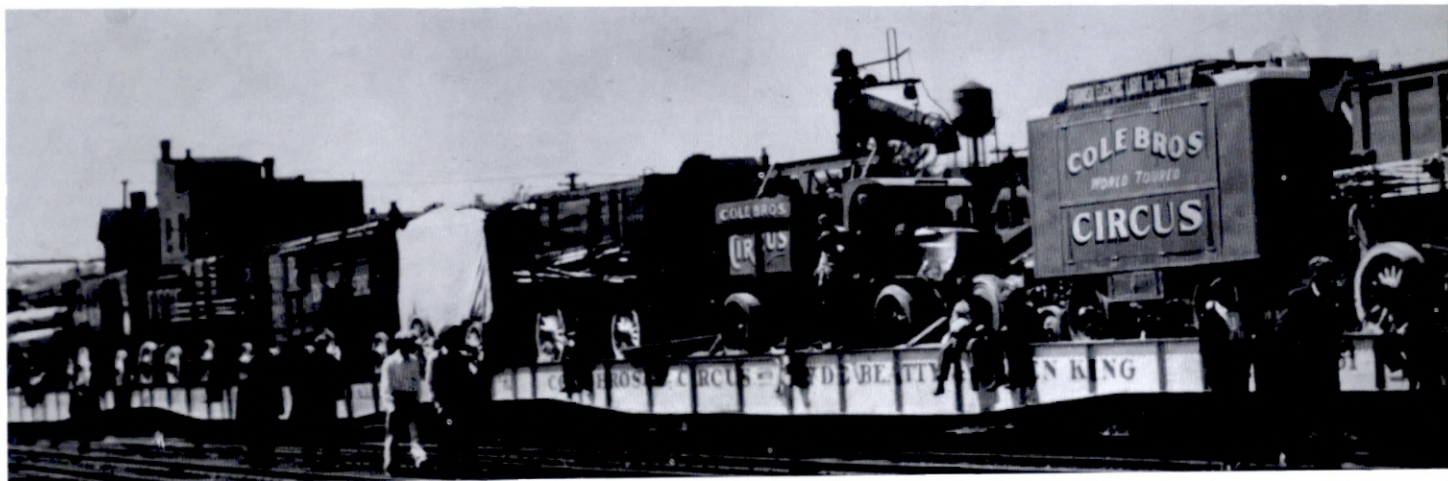


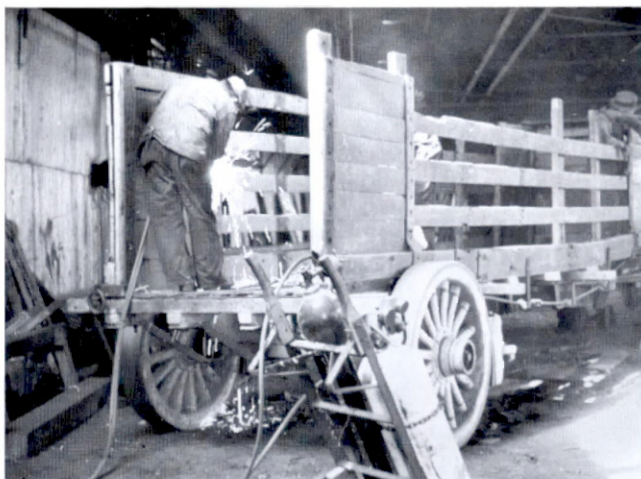
A Robbins Bros. Circus stock car is shown in the indoor car shop of the Cole quarters. All photos are by the author.

seats, baggage and parade wagons, coaches, the bill car and so on.

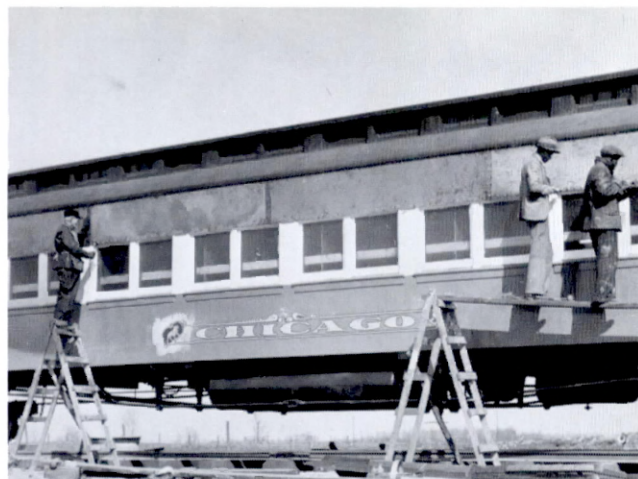
On a sunny day in early November Nat Green—may God rest his soul, Clint Finney and the writer took off from Chicago to visit the goings on at Rochester. Adkins and Terrell were there, so was Allen King and Clyde Beatty. Terrell told us his plans—

The loaded Cole Beatty train is shown as it is about to be unloaded at an early stand in Covington, Kentucky, in 1935.





A former Christy Bros. Circus wagon in the welding shop in Rochester, being rebuilt for the 1935 season.



Steel plates are being added to the side of this coach in preparation for the new Cole Bros. Clyde Beatty Circus, in Rochester, Indiana, winter quarters in the spring of 1935.

a first rate 30-car show, with top performers, to open at Chicago's Coliseum, probably day and date with Hagenbeck Wallace, which was booked for the much bigger and newer stadium on West Madison street.

Terrell announced that he had Jake Newman scouting the route, that Floyd King would handle the press, along with Bob Hickey. Newman was in California "our spy on the Barnes lot," Terrell told us, with that keen, cold pair of eyes of his, twinkling.

All that winter I spent week ends in Rochester, watching the magic of Fred Seymour's genius turn tumble-down wagons, cars and other equipment into a "splendiferous" circus. The old wooden coaches were covered with sheet steel and actually some of them looked as if they had just rolled out of one of Mr. Pullman's car shops. Giant timbers were adzed, draw-knifed and shaped into tent poles and

Center poles being cut from raw lumber, with stock cars in background.



by St. Valentine's Day it was apparent that a new circus with an old title would be ready to roll come spring.

Terrell and Adkins made an excellent team. Both knew every circus person in America, and Adkins seems to have put the program on paper, but I doubt if he made any major decision without talking it over with Terrell. I remember one day when I was talking to Mr. Adkins he had just put in a call for Denny Curtis at Denny's home at Westmont, Illinois. The question was, "Would a certain performer 'go for' the games in the pie car if he was hired for the show?" Obviously if Adkins wanted an outstanding performer, it made no difference whether that performer would leave a hunk of his salary at the dice tables or the poker games or not, but in the case of two performers being hired to fill up the end rings, and each had about the same skill, the one that was known to play the games, or the slot machines in the pie car would be hired.

The billing war that occurred in Chicago between Hagenbeck-Wallace and Cole Brothers billposters was probably the last of the old time battles between rival bannermen and

billposters. Five and six-story buildings were literally wrapped up in banners or circus paper. The press staffs of both shows were goaded into all sorts of vigorous action. All this activity stirred up Chicagoans and both shows did a good business, despite breadlines, unemployment, closed banks and idle factories.

On opening night of Cole Brothers at the old Coliseum everything seemed to go wrong—the dirt hauled in for the rings was wet and slippery. The bareback and liberty horse acts had a terrible time. Several press agents, but not Hickey, attempted to relieve their tension and were roaring drunk. A trained billy goat act which had rehearsed all winter, until the goats could walk the wire almost like Con Colleano or the Wallendas. But at opening the show Billy Goat climbed up to the pedestal, stood there shivering in fear, and refused to budge. The band missed cues, and was often playing the wrong music, because routines were shifted at the last minute. It so happened that Jess Adkins was sitting right behind me and when that reluctant Billy Goat refused to perform, after many other mishaps earlier, I looked up at Adkins—he was laughing gaily at the goat and I thought, "If a man who has worked so hard as Adkins had all winter can laugh, during this performance nothing will ever stop him."

In a few days the show was running as if it had been out all season, and the newspaper people who covered the show and were well supplied with beverages, were cordial and kind to it.

After the run in Chicago the show went on the road and one of the first stands was at Covington, Kentucky, across the Ohio from Cincinnati—I caught it there, along with a group of fans including the late and much admired Representative Maury Maverick of San Antonio. When the show came back into the barn late in 1935 it was evident that a new title would be around for quite a while.

REPORT OF 1968 CHS CONVENTION

For the third time in ten years the Circus Historical Society met in a joint convention with the Circus Model Builders. These combined meetings are always enjoyable as well as beneficial because they bring together the more serious individuals with a common interest.

This years' conventions were held in the new Anaheim, California, Convention Center and the span of the activities ran from 6 to 10 August. The Ringling Circus was there, the model builders' displays were there, and the entrance to Disneyland was less than half a mile down the street; all of which set the green light for a spontaneous program that ran without a hitch. The only resemblance to formality was the banquet which was held on the evening of the 9th. The next evening Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. (Chang) Reynolds hosted a get-together at their home in Pasadena for all of the California members and anybody east of Needles who could get there. With fifty people showing, they had a straw house.

For we eastern members it was a pleasure to meet those West Coast members, who heretofore were only names in our rosters, and to renew old ties with those we have known before. We want to thank the Al. G. Barnes Ring of the Circus Model Builders and the Reynolds' for arranging a most enjoyable week.

Those who registered in Anaheim and, or, attended the party at the Reynolds' were:

Mr. & Mrs. Don Carson, Long Beach, Calif.
Don Francis, Baraboo, Wisc.
Mr. & Mrs. Joe Bissell, Lynwood, Calif.
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Briggs, California
Doug Lyon, Burbank, Calif.
Mr. & Mrs. Lyman Sheldon, Hollywood, Calif.
Mr. & Mrs. Albert Webb, Arcadia, Calif.
Mr. & Mrs. O'Lee Carlstrom, Los Angeles, Calif.
Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Harrison, California
Kent Ghiard, Honolulu, Hawaii
Albert Conover, Xenia, Ohio
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Conover, Xenia, Ohio
Mr. and Mrs. Robert MacDougall, Van Nuys, Cal.
Edward Russell, San Pedro, Cal.
Mr. and Mrs. Bill Williams, San Pablo, Cal.
Joseph Rettinger, Tempe, Arizona
Mr. and Mrs. Chester Slusser, and their three sons, Porterville, Cal.
Glenn Draper, Burley, Idaho
Mr. and Mrs. Del Wentworth, Monrovia, Cal.
Eugene Moreland, Van Nuys, Cal.
Ben Hammer, Jr., Burbank, Cal.
Jack Bergman, San Gabriel, Cal.
Mr. and Mrs. Al Halpern, son, daughter and son-in-law, Anaheim, Cal.
Ralph Rodgers, El Cajon, Cal.
Mr. and Mrs. John Corson, their son and daughter, Monroeville, Pennsylvania
Gaylord Hartman, Washington, Pennsylvania
Stuart Thayer, Ann Arbor, Michigan
Robert Doc Hayden, Thousand Oaks, Cal.
Oscar Jacobson, Santa Anna, Cal.
Perry Luth, Lakewood, Cal.

RINGLING ESTABLISHES CLOWN COLLEGE



Following suggestions that the clown numbers on the "Greatest Show on Earth" could be strengthened, the show has established a school for training new clowns for both editions of the 1969 season.

CHS member Mel Miller, former curator of the Ringling Museum of the Circus, in Sarasota, is in charge. Miller was a member of the Ringling Barnum clown alley a number of years ago. The above photo shows Miller in clown makeup.

Pat Valdo, whose clown background is covered in another article in this issue, will head the faculty of the "Clown College," he will be assisted by other veteran clowns.

The training sessions will begin at the show's winter quarters in Venice, Florida, in mid October.

Charles Goettman, Hollywood, Cal.
William Biggerstaff, North Hollywood, Cal.
Carl Helbing, Phoenix, Ariz.
Frank Goldquist, Savanna, Ill.
Robert Farwell, San Diego, Cal.
Larry Baggett, Salem, Oregon
Dave Mullaney, RBB&B Circus, So. Braintree, Mass.
Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Borders, Los Angeles, Cal.
George Morrissey, Las Vegas, Nev.
Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Harms, Palo Alto, Cal.
Albert Livzey, Manhattan Beach, Cal.
Thomas Lehman, North Hollywood, Cal.
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Reynolds, Pasadena, Cal.
Jerry Cash, Los Angeles, Cal.
Bob Taber, Riverside, Cal.

FREDDIE DAW'S 15-PAGE ALL-CIRCUS CATALOG

Freddie Daw's All-Circus Catalog, 3-hole punched for adding new pages when printed. Subscribers will receive 3-Ring Letters when published and all new pages FREE OF CHARGE. Send only \$3.00 to the address below for your subscription. Great for 1/4 scale model builders.

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BACK ISSUES BANDWAGON MAGAZINE

| | |
|------|--|
| 1961 | March-April Sept.-Oct.-Nov. December |
| 1962 | July-August November-December |
| 1963 | January-February March-April July-August September-October November-December |
| 1964 | January-February March-April July-August September-October November-December |
| 1965 | January-February March-April May-June July-August November-December |
| 1966 | All six issues. |
| 1967 | All six issues. |
| 1968 | To date. |

The above issues are available but we have only a few of some. Refunds will be sent, when an issue is depleted. While they last \$1.00 each, we pay postage.

Bandwagon Magazine
2515 Dorset Rd.
Columbus, Ohio 43221



This interesting view of the Walter L. Main Circus was taken around 1900. The famous Main shell bandwagon is shown between the corner statue tab wagon and the menagerie top. The high pole on the right was no doubt used by a free attraction, popular with circuses of that period. The original is an 11 x 14" print and is from the Burt Wilson Collection.